



GEORGIA HEALTHY FAMILY ALLIANCE

The Georgia Healthy Family Alliance Awards \$30,000 in Second Cycle Community Health Grants To Support Local Health Projects

Final 2021 Grant Application Deadline is August 2nd

The Georgia Healthy Family Alliance (GHFA) awarded six Community Health Grant Award applicants \$30,000 in second cycle 2021 grants. Grant awards were made to GAFP member affiliated community organizations that support GHFA program priorities including underserved populations and programs that promote healthy practices. **The application deadline for third cycle 2021 grants is August 2, 2021.** Visit www.georgiahealthyfamilyalliance.org/grants/ for more information or to download the application. Second cycle 2021 Community Health Grant recipients are:

1. Improving COVID Vaccination Rates in Minority and Underserved Communities in Metro Atlanta, Neena Ghose, MD- Atlanta \$5,000

As of April 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic is responsible for over 500,000 deaths in the United States and over 2.9 million deaths worldwide. (New York Times Interactive Dashboard). Vaccine hesitancy, defined as, “delays in acceptance or refusal of vaccination despite availability of vaccination services” (McDonald, 2015), is a significant barrier to effective immunization programs. It is evident from early data on the COVID-19 vaccine that African American and Hispanic are less likely to get the vaccine worsening disparities. African Americans are also more likely to have worse complications from COVID and experience higher mortality rates. In March 2021 Georgia opened vaccination to everyone over the age of 16 years. As of April 14, 2021, only 18% of the state has been fully vaccinated and 31% of adult population has received at least one dose.

Georgia currently ranks 49th among all states with its poor vaccination rates and only 22% of Blacks and 25.3% of American Indian or Alaska Natives have received at least one dose. The Emory University Family Medicine Residency program will partner with Sage Navigator on a series of educational interventions, transportation vouchers and assistance with vaccine appointment scheduling to increase the COVID-19 vaccination rate among African American or low income older adults aged 55+ in the Greater Atlanta Metropolitan area by 80%.

2. Georgia Harm Reduction Coalition, Syringe Services Program, Bonzo Reddick, MD -Savannah \$5,000

The newly established Georgia Harm Reduction Coalition (GHRC) is a partnership between Mercer University School of Medicine and the JC Lewis Primary Health Care Center (JCLPHCC), a federally qualified health center and designated healthcare for the homeless site. JCLPHCC runs a weekly mobile homeless clinic that provides acute and chronic medical care and, most recently, COVID-19 vaccination and testing. We recently began serving a homeless camp that has high rates of injection drug use among residents, with self-report of sharing and reusing of needles. JCLPHCC has provided pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV at its physical clinic location for years but has had a strong desire to also include a syringe services program in its effort to reduce HIV transmission in the community.



GEORGIA HEALTHY FAMILY ALLIANCE

The goal of this new project is to pilot a joint syringe services program in homeless camps in Savannah, GA, that will include distribution and safe disposal of syringes and other injection equipment, distribution of the overdose reversal medication naloxone, linkage to substance use disorder treatment, and referrals to other health and social services. Our goal is to demonstrate that this new model of care, which includes a mobile harm reduction program integrated into a mobile medical and behavioral health clinic, is effective at reducing viral and bacterial infections associated with injection drug use, reducing opioid overdoses, and decreasing the number of used needles and syringes left behind in homeless camps.

3. West Georgia Transportation and Ambulatory Vitals Project, Allison Key, MD-Bowdon \$ 5,000

Be the Light Medical Missions, Inc is a non-profit organization that exists to help people in Haralson, Carroll, Polk and Heard counties have access to basic medical care and necessities. There are two primary goals: the first is to offer free transportation services to patients in a rural community to their doctor's appointments, including assistance to and from the building/waiting room. Many patients are lacking transportation or are unable to safely drive themselves. Project goal is to purchase and have in use a non-emergent transportation van with volunteer drivers and patient escorts. Plan to transport 5-10 patients per week within the first six months of service and purchase/distribute 200 self-care kits that include equipment and education for patients who have diabetes, COPD, hypertension, or other high risk medical conditions that require self-monitoring by year's end. The first steps to improving one's health are understanding your diagnosis and being proactive in the reversal or prevention of complications. Project will provide the basic resources needed for patients to take the first steps in restoring good health. The second goal is to provide blood pressure cuffs, pulse oximeter, and blood glucose meters (when indicated) to patients who may need additional monitoring but have difficulty with access to care. This would include education on how to use these pieces of equipment and parameters for when to seek the advice of a healthcare provider.

4. Prevent Child Abuse Habersham, Inc. dba Family Resource Center of Northeast GA Child Safety & Child Health Project, Donald Fordham, MD-Habersham \$5,000

The Family Resource Center of Northeast Georgia (FRC) serves families in Northeast Georgia. Our families are considered "at-risk" as 95% live under the Georgia poverty rate. Families are often referred through DFCS or the Mountain Judicial Court Circuit, which includes the Family Court and the Drug Court. FRC receives referrals and court mandates which require parents to go through a 12-18 month process whereby the outcome will determine whether they are reunited with their children. FRC's services include supervised visitation, parenting classes, addiction recovery support groups, life skills training, child development programs, and Triple P parenting courses. The 95% of parents living below Georgia's poverty line do not have the support systems or resources to purchase quality car seats for their children. Due to the lack of resources, many at-risk parents who receive in-home visitation services are unable to purchase diapers and specialized types of formula necessary for their baby's healthy development. The Community Health Grant will provide much-needed assistance to purchase 20 car seats for families in need with remaining funds providing formula and diapers as well.



GEORGIA HEALTHY FAMILY ALLIANCE

5. Cancer Navigators Counseling & Transportation Project, Lyndsay Claroni, DO – Rome, \$5,000

Cancer Navigators (CN) serves as a complement to the medical expertise of cancer care providers by guiding those affected by cancer toward a better understanding of diagnosis and care while connecting them with needed resources and services – free of charge. CN has remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and strives to adequately meet cancer patients' basic needs, relieve stress, increase chances of survival, provide hope, enhance quality of life, and ensure no one in Northwest Georgia journeys through cancer alone. CN is meeting patients however they are most comfortable, whether that be via phone, Zoom, or in-person in a socially distanced space, and increasing the amount of supplies given to reduce patients' outings. CN's Counseling Program supports the mental health of cancer patients by providing one-hour counseling sessions, with a licensed clinical social worker employed by CN, to patients who physicians have referred to CN specifically for counseling and who could not otherwise afford counseling. Many CN patients suffer from anxiety and lack a support system. There is not a per-patient limit to the number of sessions; the counselor evaluates each patient to determine his/her progress. CN hosts a weekly support group and patients who no longer require private counseling sessions are encouraged to attend. In 2020, CN provided 2,534 services to 1,323 patients and experienced significant growth in counseling needs with the number of sessions increasing from 511 in 2019 to 842 in 2020. CN's Transportation Program provides up to \$100 in gas cards/bus vouchers (\$25 increments) to patients undergoing active cancer treatment and needing transportation assistance, allowing them to get to treatments, giving them the opportunity to fight and increase their chances of survival. This grant will provide 33 cancer patients each a one-hour counseling session and 35 cancer patients \$100 in transportation assistance.

6. Hearts & Hands Clinic Patient Lab Tests Project 2021, Brian DeLoach, MD- Statesboro \$ 5,000

The Hearts & Hands Clinic provides free medical and dental care to Bulloch County residents who are uninsured, ineligible for Medicaid and Medicare, and who live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. The clinic sees approximately 500 patients per year. Seventeen percent of Bulloch County's 77,296 residents aged under 65 years do not have health insurance and 24.6% live in poverty, twice the national average of poverty (12.3%) (census.gov). A considerable number of the clinic's patients are out of work due to health-related issues, have been laid off and are searching for employment, or are working low-wage jobs that do not offer insurance or provide enough income to cover medical expenses. Each new patient requires basic lab tests which are repeated on an annual basis. Many patients require follow up tests to determine their diagnosis and course of care. Because of this, lab fees comprise a considerable percentage of the clinics budget. This project will provide 100 new patients with four lab tests (Comprehensive Metabolic Panel (CMP), Complete Blood Count (CBC), Lipid Panel, Hemoglobin A1C) and 50 current diabetic patients with four lab tests performed annually (CMP, CBC, Lipid Panel, Hemoglobin A1C). The grant will also provide 50 current patients with hypertension with three lab tests performed annually (CMP, CBC, Lipid Panel) and specialized lab tests to 60 patients.